



HIGH-RISK INDUSTRIES (AGRICULTURE, CONSTRUCTION, MINING, HEALTH CARE)

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM?

- Mining, agriculture, and construction consistently lead the Nation in occupational fatalities, with respective rates of 25, 22, and 14 fatalities per 100,000 workers compared with an average overall fatality rate of 4.8 per 100,000. Injury rates also are high for people working in these industries.
- Although people working in the health care sector have a lower risk for occupation-related fatalities than the above mentioned industries, the injury rate for health care workers is higher than that for persons working in other sectors.

WHAT HAS NIOSH ACCOMPLISHED?

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has used industry-specific approaches and partnering to target research on the health of workers in these high-risk industries. The agriculture (www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/agriculture) and construction (www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/construction) industries have been targeted since 1990 and as a result are safer than they were a decade ago. NIOSH has 17 cooperative agreements, including 10 with regional centers for agricultural safety and health research (www.cdc.gov/niosh/agctrhom.html). In addition, university-based researchers in 20 states address safety and health issues across a variety of construction trades. An industry approach for mining (www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining) began in 1996 with active projects now under way in 30 states. NIOSH's own intramural research, surveillance, and information dissemination activities also add an important dimension to improving conditions in these high-risk industries. For example, NIOSH is conducting a specific research program to prevent occupational illness and injury among nurses.

Examples of program in action:

- NIOSH improved the safety of people working in the construction industry by identifying fatal falls during communication tower construction (www.cdc.gov/niosh/2001156.html) as being an emerging hazard and then working closely with industry and government partners to identify safe practices.
- For the health care sector, NIOSH has released a report on identifying and preventing violence in hospitals (www.cdc.gov/niosh/2002-101.html) and a compendium of recent research projects and programs that are intended to evaluate and prevent injury and illness among health care workers (www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2003-108/2003108pd.html).
- In the agriculture industry, NIOSH has supported research to prevent tractor rollovers (www.cdc.gov/niosh/roppps.html), the leading cause of farm-related fatalities. This work has led to more effective educational efforts to increase farmers' use of tractor retrofit kits to protect against rollovers.
- In mining, NIOSH has developed a series of training programs that target certain hazardous tasks and mining occupations. The programs have been widely disseminated to and accepted by the mining community. An example is the mine emergency response training simulator that helped prepare the rescue personnel who saved the lives of nine miners trapped in an inundated mine in Pennsylvania in July 2002.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Through surveillance, research, prevention, and control, NIOSH will continue to work to reduce fatality and injury rates in high-risk industries.

For additional information on this and other NIOSH programs, visit www.cdc.gov/niosh.

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